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INTERACTIVELY CONNECTING CORPORATE POLICY AND PROCESS TO POLICY CONSUMERS

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ABSTRACT

Connected policy and process techniques are presented herein that facilitate extracting policies from archaic documents and putting them into interactive policy requirements at the fingertips of the people who have to follow them; thereby simplifying their experience and enabling speed to execution. Techniques presented herein may address various prioritization principles including, but not limited to reduction of risk from non-compliance; policy mapping, impact analysis (e.g., new business model, etc.), bi-directional linkages, and policy analytics; tighter controls around policy ownership and editing/approvals/socialization; increased user compliance and ease of consumption; providing improved policy governance and controls; and enhanced analytics.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Corporations, institutions, and agencies around the world have hundreds of policy documents with thousands of requirements for their employees and/or vendors to follow. These policies are typically complex documents that look and feel like contracts that are written by a lawyer and are usually closely related to other company policies, standards, and/or processes. It is often a problem in corporate environments that employees and/or vendors cannot find or understand policy requirements easily when they need them and, thus, may waste time reviewing many policy documents in order to determine answers. Thus, employees and/or vendors many times may not follow policy requirements because they cannot find them, cannot understand the context around them, and/or must open-up multiple policies and processes to determine answers, which can create a complicated experience and/or compliance risks. In this proposal, such employees and/or vendors that are under obligation to follow one or more corporate policies may be referred to as "Policy Consumers."

The problems and risks created by such policy-related issues can be varied. For example, policies may be overwhelming to the average Policy Consumer. It is often a complaint that a corporation may have too many policies when, in actuality, it may not be that the corporation has too many or not enough policies, but rather that Policy Consumers cannot find the policies that they need when they are searching for them.

Further, policy documents are not normally standalone and determining a policy may involve opening multiple policy documents to determine all the requirements (e.g., Travel Policy, Expense Policy, Gifts and Entertainment Policy, etc.). Thus, it can take Policy Consumers a long time to find the information they need within a policy or group of policies and can lead to Policy Consumers getting confused, frustrated, and/or misled. Additionally, Policy Desks, Help Desks, and/or Policy Owners are frequently asked questions by Policy Consumers seeking to find a policy and do the right thing when they do not know where to go to find answers (e.g., "Can I...," "What is the Policy for...," "What if...," etc.).

Moreover, Policy Consumers may not always understand the context behind policies. For example, Policy Consumers may not understand what the exact requirements are for a policy, what the scope is for a policy, if it applies to them, why it is in place, etc. Further, Policy Consumers cannot typically interact with policies and view them by role, function, and/or subject/topic nor can they go directly to an answer regarding a policy question, to advice on a specific question, etc. without reaching out to a Policy Owner and/or representative.

Still further, policies are typically consumed at the document level, so businesses may find it hard to be nimble or flexible when needing to adapt and execute new business models, requirements, and/or regulations in order to provide policy updates to all the Policy Consumers who need them. Yet another issue is that policy owners, authors, subject matter experts, Governance, Risk Management, and Compliance (GRC) experts, etc. typically cannot easily map policies to tools and systems, business rules, standards and/or legal/regulatory requirements when policies are stored and managed at the document level.

Existing policy solutions in the market today typically do not make it any easier to navigate, understand, and/or simplify the consumption of policies. Policies are still managed and consumed at the document level in all these solutions. Some solutions may

claim to address policy-related issues at a statement level but this is typically only for mapping and exceptions rather than for use and consumption.

Further, industry solutions currently available for policy management typically approach policy with the view of Governance, Risk, and Controls, but they do not address challenges concerning policy ownership and end user ease of consumption while accounting for and following many corporate policy requirements in order to provide context-sensitive interactive policies.

This proposal provides techniques for digitizing policies in order to extract policies from a document and allow them to be managed, consumed, and/or interacted with at the statement/requirements level through use of dynamic interactions, advisors, and even artificial intelligence. These techniques are referred to herein as connected policy and process techniques, which may facilitate a robust, Information Technology (IT)-developed system that may be implemented/adopted by corporate policy teams, security and trust offices, corporate quality, finance, engineering, human resources (HR), and/or the like. The connected policy and process techniques may have an industry-wide applicability and impact for corporations, agencies, institutions, and/or the like.

For this proposal, policies can be uploaded, created, and managed at the statement/requirements level and capabilities may be provided to develop policy interactions and advisors that may decode the complexity of needing to follow thousands of requirements. Thus, this proposal simplifies how Policy Consumers can quickly and easily locate policies and, further, provides for integrating processes with policy within a system in order to facilitate access to both policy and process information. The audience/users of the techniques presented herein may include Policy Consumers (e.g., employees, consultants/contractors, partners/suppliers/vendors, etc.), policy and process owners, GRC teams, policy governance and enforcement teams, as well as tools and applications, which could be delivered through an IT-supported cloud-based platform and service layer but could also be packaged for cloud or licensing consumption.

Figure 1, below, illustrates a system integration architecture for a connected policy system that may provide for implementing the connected policy and process techniques of this proposal.

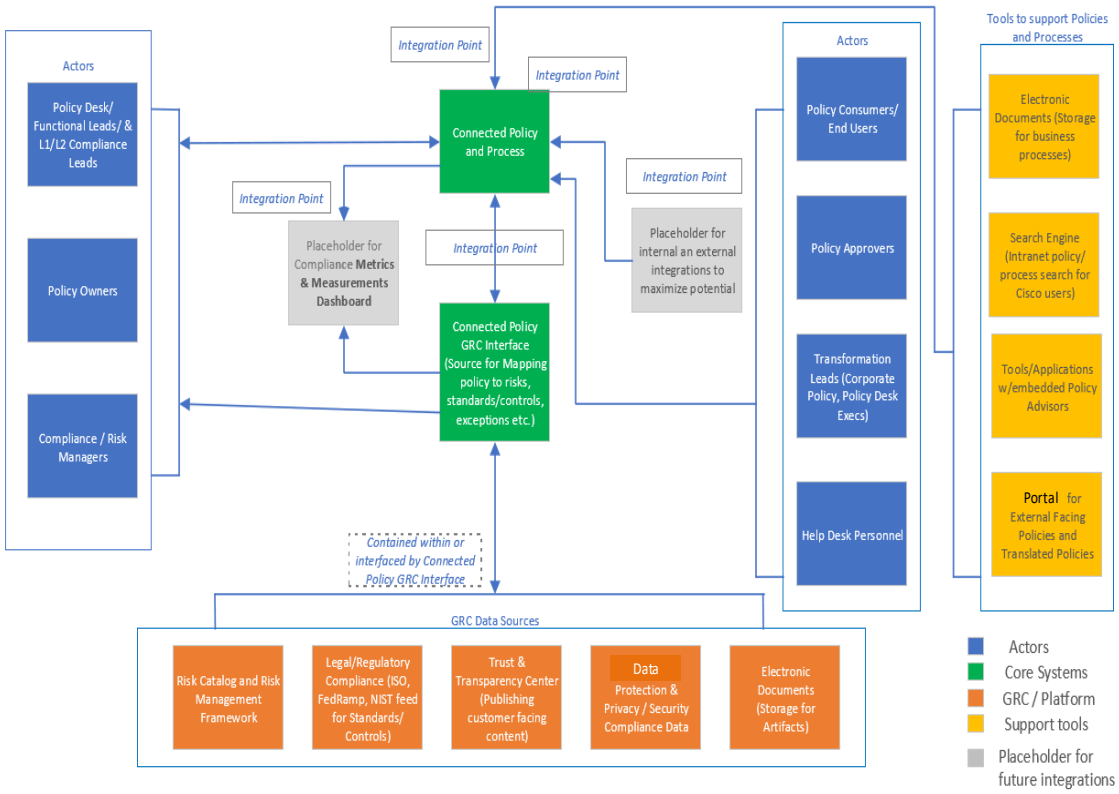

Figure 1

In various implementations, the architecture shown in Figure 1 may be integrated with different back-end and/or front-end tools. Various integration points are displayed between the connected policy system and various example corporate solutions, including use cases illustrating how different interactions can interface with the connected policy system. The connected policy system may include and/or provide various architectural elements including, but not limited to, a service layer architecture, one or more relational databases, source code, an Application Program Interface (API) that can be used for user-facing systems and/or tools for referencing policy requirements (e.g., Expenses, Travel, Code of Business Conduct (COBC), Procurement, etc.), multi-role access levels depending on permissions (e.g., end user, super admin, policy owner access to only the policies they own, etc.), access control and security, document control, event logging, among others.

Various features of the connected policy and process techniques of this proposal may address prioritization principles, including: reduction of risk from non-compliance;

policy mapping, impact analysis (e.g., new business model, etc.), bi-directional linkages, and policy analytics; tighter controls around policy ownership and editing/approvals/socialization; increased user compliance and ease of consumption; providing improved policy governance and controls; and enhanced analytics.

Features addressing these principles may include, for example, providing a model in which policies may not be provided in a document format but instead managed and consumed at the statement level with metadata, mapping, approvals, and support of each statement. A policy editor can be provided that may allow a policy owner or administrator (admin) to upload or create policies and manage them at the requirements/statement-level. A policy interaction builder may be provided that allows a policy owner, subject matter expert, or admin to build contextual interactions for a digitized policy. A policy advisor builder may be provided that allows multiple policy interactions to be grouped into an advisor for Policy Consumers. A decision tree builder may account for situations that are more complex and may allow a Policy Consumer to answer questions in order to receive answers and/or recommendations. A Policy Consumer may selectively search for policies, policy statements and related processes by role, function, and/or subject/topic.

Additional features may include a user consumption interface and models that may provide for the ability to request exceptions, provide feedback, and ask questions. Further features may include the ability to embed policy consumption of dynamic and interactive policy statements directly from an application or system and the ability to map each statement/requirement to industry standards, regulations, other policy requirements, processes, etc.

In some implementations, chat bot automation may be provided to operate interactively with a policy user/consumer through an artificial intelligence interface. Other automation features and/or functionality can be provided in order to manage and execute policies at the requirements/statement level. Analysis and intelligent design tools could be implemented to enhance and improve policies with features such as automatically flagging duplicate policy statements, identifying policy statements that are difficult to interpret and suggesting efficiencies, and ability to measure and track compliance to policies. Various additional features may include a combination of automated notifications of periodic reviews and/or new/updated/obsoleted policy announcements, notifications of subscribed

policies and policy requirements, tracking and control of policy reviews and approvals, analytics and reporting, regulation and standards mapping reporting, various role-based access interfaces (e.g., end user, administrative, policy owner, 'super admin', etc.), exception and action item tracking and reporting, attestation of policies, and process inventory & access with digitization of interactive processes tied to policies. Still other features may include the ability for policy users to ask questions and provide feedback to policy owners.

Various interfaces of the connected policy system are illustrated below with reference to Figures 2–5. For example, Figure 2 illustrates a connected policy information or launch screen.

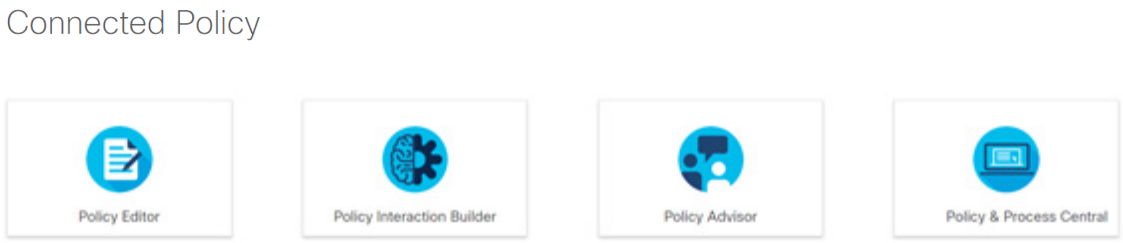

Figure 2

As shown in Figure 2, a launch screen for the connected policy system for a Power Admin role may include a Policy Editor interface element (e.g., a button), a Policy Interaction Builder interface element, a Policy Advisor Builder interface element, and a Policy and Process Central (interface element). The user may interface with the launch screen to perform operations, tasks, etc. within the connected policy system.

Figure 3, below, illustrates a screen shot of the Policy Editor for a Policy Owner role showing a list of digitized policies.

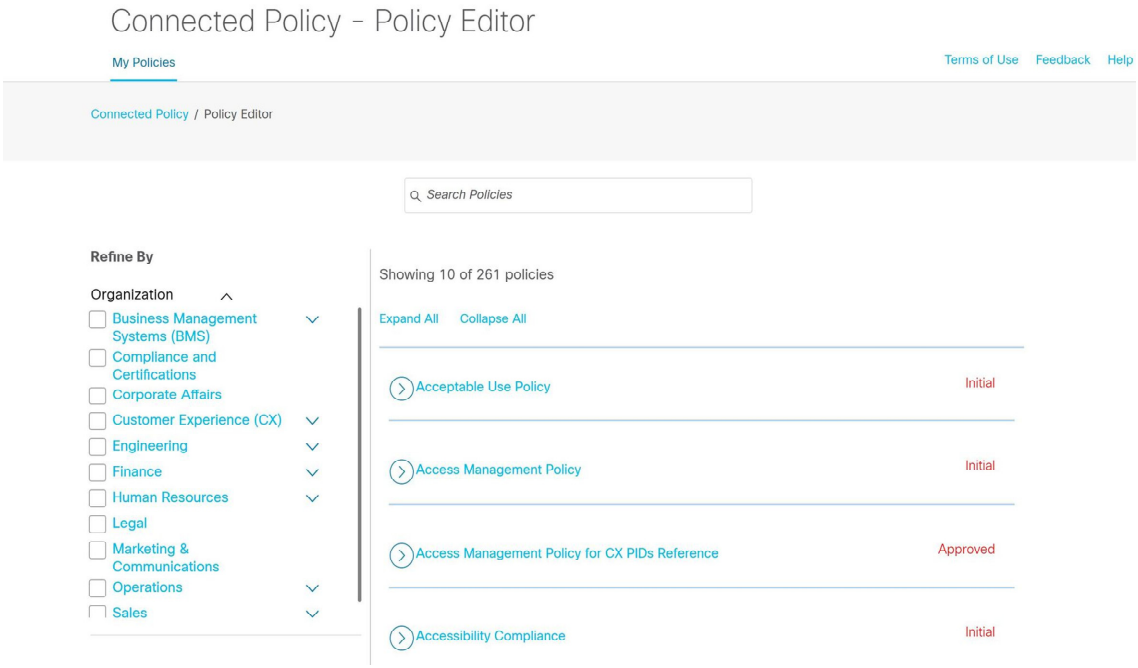

Figure 3

Figure 4, below, illustrates a live screen shot of a digitized policy showing edit/entry details at the requirements level for an example Global Expense Policy.

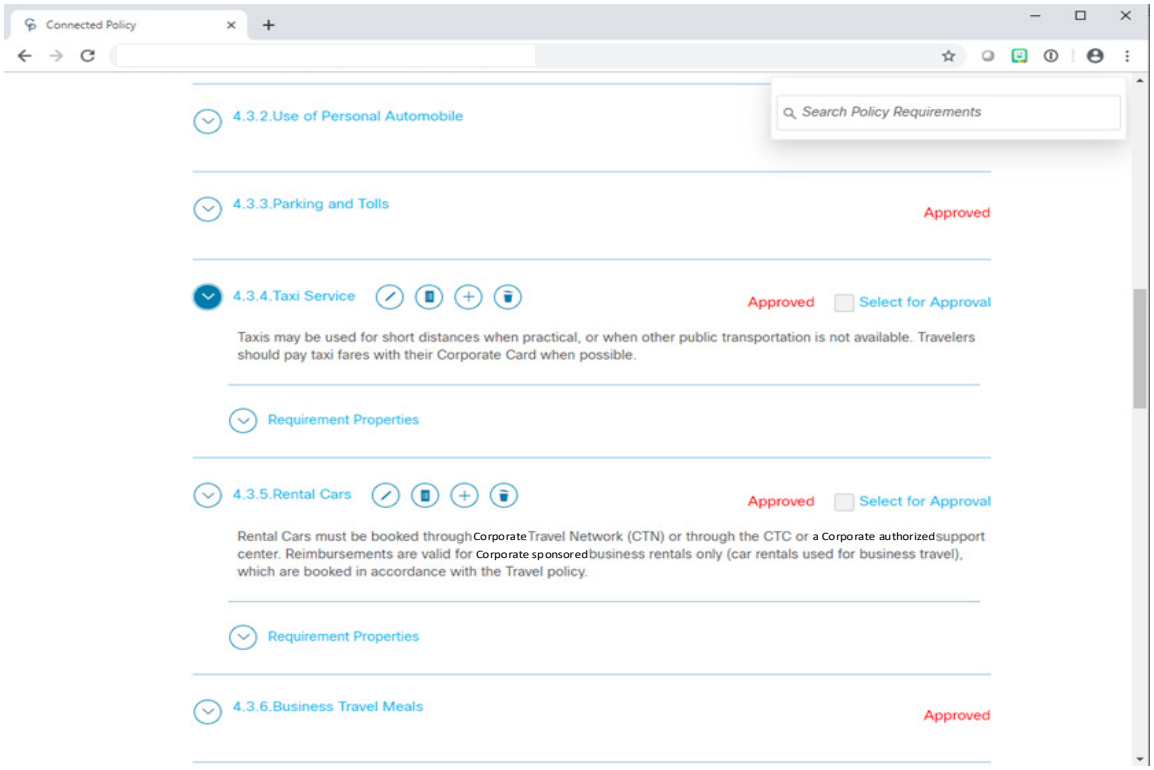

Figure 4

As illustrated in Figure 4, each policy statement can be managed separately and is able to be tagged and approved at the requirements level.

Figure 5, below, illustrates a live screen shot of a policy interaction in which the exact policy requirements/statements related to that interaction are shown regardless whether the statements may originate from multiple policies (e.g., Expense, Travel, etc.).

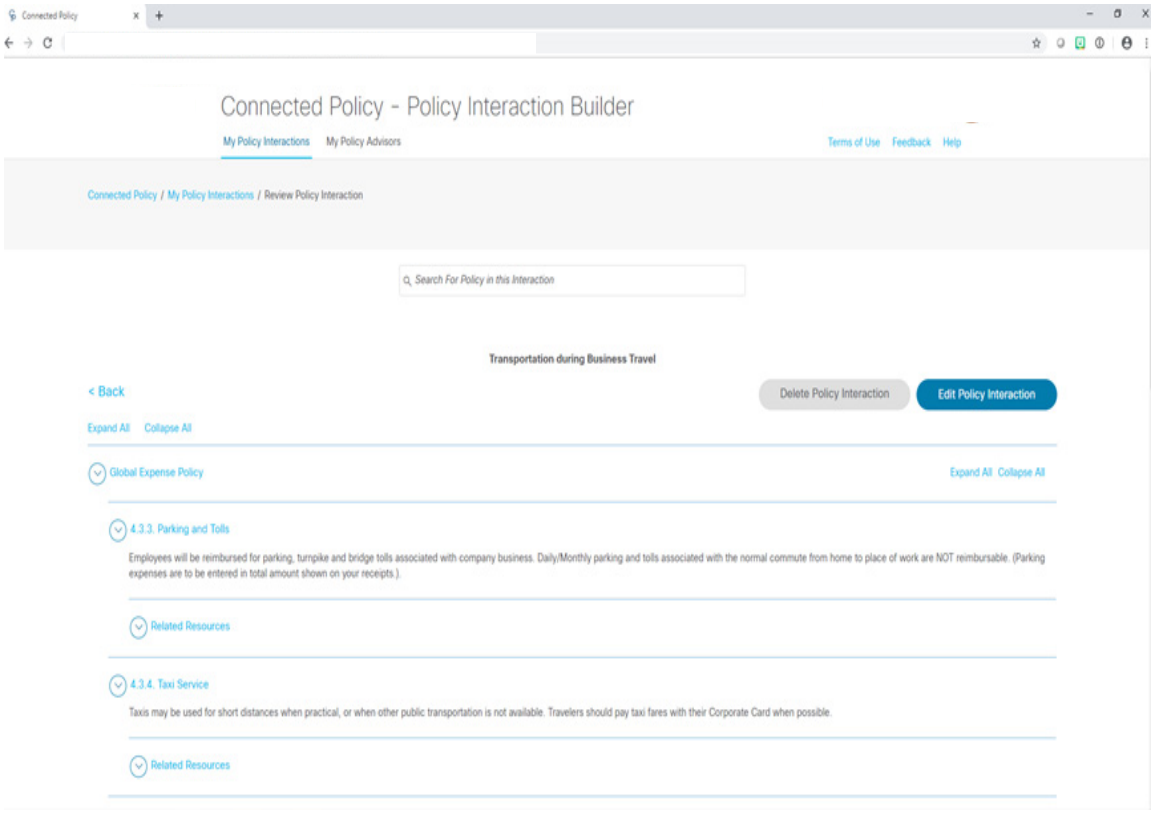

Figure 5

For Figure 5, a "Transportation during Business Travel" interaction example is shown in which a user to interact with in order to understand all the requirements of transportation (e.g., rental car, airline, personal car, taxi, etc.).

Unique value of the connected policy and process techniques provided by this proposal may contribute to the ownership and consumption of policies and processes including values related to risk, threat, regulatory, and business process. For example, the techniques of this proposal can provide for addressing policy gaps identified by audits, security architects, customers, policy desk teams, etc. Additionally, the techniques may provide for the ability to reevaluate policies/controls after a formal risk assessment to help prioritize, categorize, and quantify risk therein. Further, the techniques may provide for

the ability to identify business processes that help mitigate risk and apply a risk management framework to operationalize and improve processes to drive policy compliance and reduce risk. Providing for the ability to link related policies and processes to policies and policy statements may aid in such operations.

Other value may be realized through ease of policy consumption, which may include three components—accessibility, readability, and usability. Accessibility may address aspects such as whether policies can be easily accessed. By digitizing policies according to the connected policy and process techniques described herein, policies may be accessible/available on different devices, types of devices, etc. Additionally, embeddable APIs can be integrated into applications so that users can directly access applicable policy requirements. Further, accessibility features for employees with disabilities may be incorporated. Accessibility value can further be realized by improving search functionalities that may be facilitated through updating/integrating the policy advisor tool.

Readability may address aspects such as whether Policy Consumers understand what is being asked of them in relation to policies. In general, readability scores (e.g., Flesch-Kinkaid) are wildly inaccurate and do not measure comprehension or consistency. Policy readability can be improved using the connected policy and process techniques described herein through the application of editing principles to help ensure policies are clear, concise, consistent, and comprehensible. Further, contradictory or duplicative requirements, inconsistencies, etc. can be removed from policies using techniques of this proposal. Additionally, collateral documentation can be updated/created to assist readers and links to third-party documentation outside corporate purview (e.g., material becomes dated, contradictory, dead links, etc.) and be removed using techniques of this proposal.

Usability may address aspects such as whether the necessary tools and resources have been provided in order to comply with a policy, which can affect user experience depending on whether policies are functional or frustrating. Usability may be improved using the connected policy and process techniques described herein through any combination of: incorporating customer requirements, aligning corporate governance policy templates to help ensure consistency and familiarity, removing extraneous links to simplify interrelationships, identifying training/awareness opportunities, and/or providing

situation-based guidance through the form of decision trees, advisors, chat bots/artificial intelligence, and/or the like.

In summary, connected policy and process techniques are presented herein that facilitate extracting policies from archaic documents and putting them into interactive policy requirements at the fingertips of the people who have to follow them; thereby simplifying their experience and enabling speed to execution. These techniques may address various prioritization principles including, but not limited to reduction of risk from non-compliance; policy mapping, impact analysis (e.g., new business model, etc.), bi-directional linkages, and policy analytics; tighter controls around policy ownership and editing/approvals/socialization; increased user compliance and ease of consumption; providing improved policy governance and controls; and enhanced analytics.